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Director of Central Intelligence

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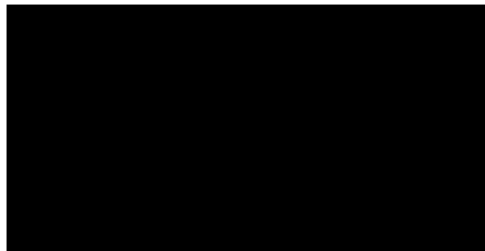
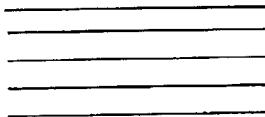
National Intelligence Daily

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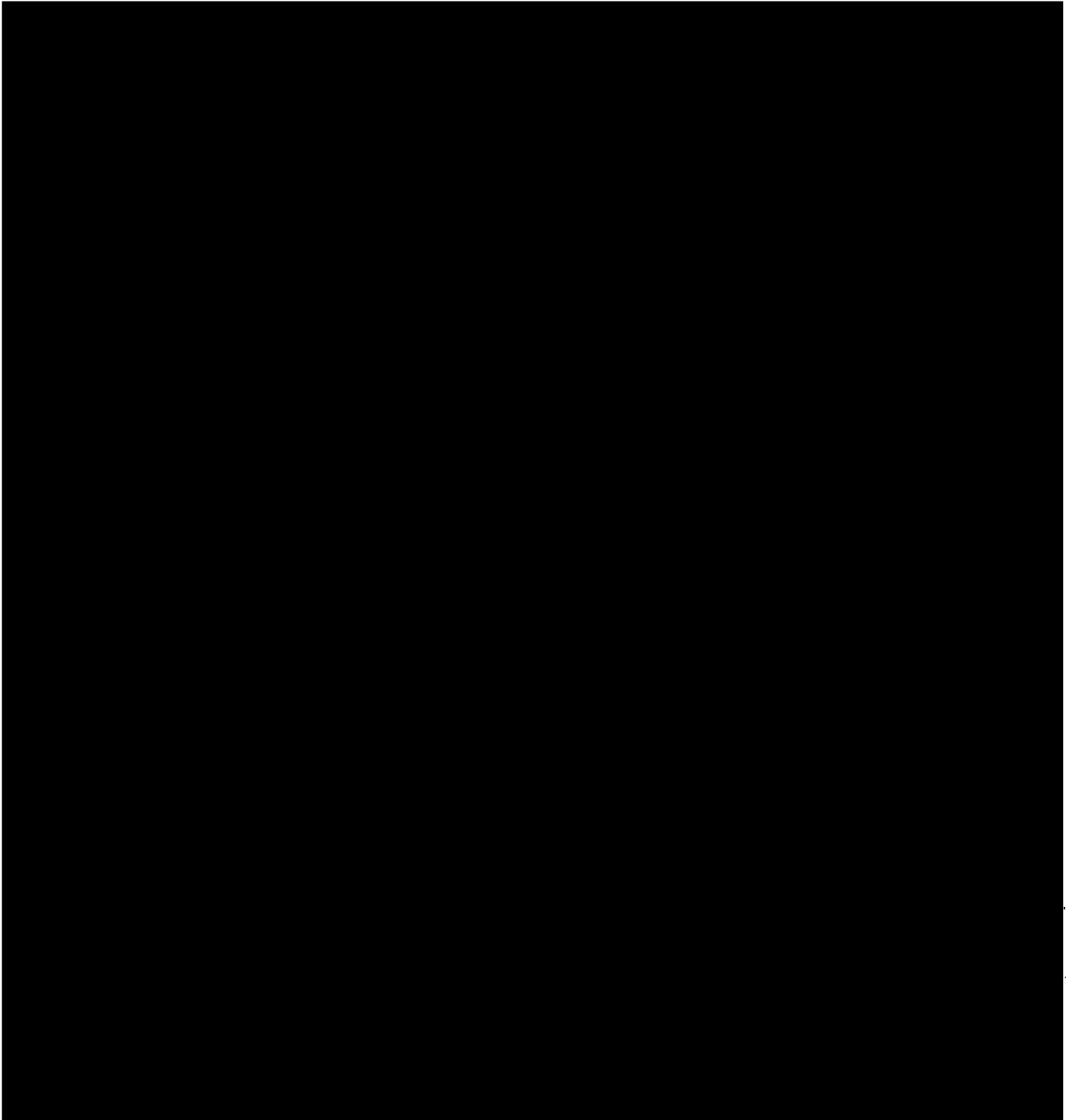
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29 May 1998

Current Notes

SOUTH ASIA

India:

Pakistani Nuclear Test Puts BJP on Defensive [REDACTED]

Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee in the short term will take heat from the political opposition, but in the long run the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) may be able to strengthen its hold on power. News of the Pakistani test threw the Indian Parliament's lower house into turmoil, with opposition members stridently criticizing the BJP-led government for provoking an arms race.

- Opponents on Wednesday dubbed Vajpayee "atom bomb" and questioned whether New Delhi's tests ensure India's self-defense.
- Hawkish Home Minister Advani called Islamabad's nuclear policy "Kashmir specific" and claimed New Delhi tested in part to counter Pakistan's "proxy war" there. [REDACTED]

Vajpayee yesterday called for "national unity" against an "external aggressor" in the wake of Pakistan's nuclear test. After an emergency cabinet meeting, he told journalists that the blasts justified India's own tests and that he will present a report on the Pakistani test today to Parliament. Vajpayee hinted that India may end its self-proclaimed moratorium on nuclear testing, saying the "new situation" requires a policy review. [REDACTED]

Unconfirmed Indian press reports say a regional party that contributes seven members to the coalition government yesterday suspended its support, citing disgruntlement over local matters. *If other coalition allies follow suit, the BJP could call a snap election to gain an absolute majority.*

- *The time and money required to mount such an election and earlier campaign promises to avoid frequent votes will make the BJP hesitant to call the election unless it must.*
 - *The severe disarray in other parties argues against a strong challenge to the BJP in the coming months.* [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED] [REDACTED]